

CLAIM LISTING:

1. ***(Amended)*** A prosthesis to replace all or a portion of a natural facet joint on a vertebra, comprising:
 - a fastening element adapted to be removably attached to the vertebra;
 - a structure removably attached to the fastening element; and
 - a prosthetic facet joint articulating surface dimensioned to replace all or a portion of a natural facet joint on the vertebra wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface removably attaches ~~attached~~ to the structure.
2. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is fixed to the fastening element.
3. ***(Withdrawn – Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the ~~artificial facet joint~~ structure is fixed to the fastening element by an adhesive or cement.
4. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is fixed to the fastening element by mechanical attachment.
5. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is removably carried by the fastening element.
6. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is removably attached to the fastening element by frictional engagement.
7. ***(Withdrawn – Currently Amended)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the ~~artificial facet joint~~ structure is removably attached to the fastening element by a Morse taper.
8. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface comprises an insert fitted to the structure.
9. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface comprises an insert fitted by frictional engagement to the structure.

10. ***(Withdrawn)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure comprises an insert fitted by a Morse taper to the fastening element.
11. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface comprises a removable insert fitted to the structure.
12. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure pivots with respect to the fastening element.
13. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to articulate with a portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebra.
14. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a caudal portion of a natural facet joint.
15. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a caudal portion of a natural facet joint and articulate with a cephalad portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebra.
16. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is made of at least one selected prosthetic material.
17. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 16 wherein the selected prosthetic material includes polyethylene, rubber, tantalum, titanium, chrome cobalt, surgical steel, bony in-growth material, ceramic, artificial bone, or a combination thereof.
18. ***(Previously Presented)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is fixed to the vertebra by an adhesive or cement.
19. ***(Original)*** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element includes a bony in-growth material.

20. **(Withdrawn)** A method of replacing, on a vertebral body, all or a portion of a natural facet joint using the prosthesis defined in claim 1 to provide improved support for the spinal column, the method comprising the steps of
- (i) removing all or a portion of a natural articular process from the vertebral body, and
 - (ii) fixing the prosthesis as defined in claim 1 to the vertebral body to replace the removed portion of the natural articular process with the artificial facet joint structure.
21. **(Withdrawn)** A method according to claim 20 further including a step of removing at least some of the lamina from the vertebral body.
22. **(Withdrawn)** A method according to claim 20 further including a step of removing at least part of a pedicle from the vertebral body.
23. **(Previously Presented)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the structure is fixed to the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface.
24. **(Amended)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is adapted to attach ~~attached~~ to the vertebra at or near a pedicle.
25. **(Amended)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is adapted to attach ~~attached~~ to the vertebra at a location away from a pedicle.
26. **(Previously Presented)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a cephalad portion of a natural facet joint.
27. **(Previously Presented)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthetic facet joint articulating surface is adapted and configured to replace a cephalad portion of a natural facet joint and articulate with a caudal portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebra.
28. **(Previously Presented)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element is made of at least one selected prosthetic material.

29. *(Amended)* A prosthesis according to claim 28 wherein the selected prosthetic material includes prosthetic materials selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, rubber, tantalum, titanium, chrome cobalt, surgical steel, bony in-growth material, ceramic, artificial bone, or a combination thereof.

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